

ANAMALAI WILD LIFE SANCTUARY.

NAME AND SITUATION

Anaimallais Wilflife Sanctuary is situated in the Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu between ~~the~~ $10^{\circ} 12\frac{1}{2}'$ and $11^{\circ} 7'$ of North Latitude and $76^{\circ} 39'$ and $77^{\circ} 56\frac{1}{2}'$ East Longitude. It is in the Southern part of the District lying in the Taluks of Pollachi and Udumalpet. The area of the Sanctuary is 94000 Hectares. The entire Sanctuary lies on the famous Anaimalais which are a range of hills in the Western Ghats of Peninsular India.

COMMUNICATION:

It is connected by good roads from Pollachi or Udumalpet. Pollachi is the headquarters of the Sanctuary which is 40 K.m. from Coimbatore connected by train as well as motor roads. Nearest aerodrome is Coimbatore.

THE TRACT

The Sanctuary is one of the largest of the Indian Sanctuaries and the largest in Tamilnadu. The entire area is of hills and valleys and foot hills. No plains. But there are some plateau regions which are about 1000 metres in elevation.

These Anaimalai Hills are part of the Western Ghats South of Palghat gap. The range of hills run North-South and the aspect is most easterly.

In elevation the hills range from 900 to 2500 metres with rounded hill tops often exposed or covered by grass only. (Forms an ideal habitat of Nilgri Tahr). But the valleys in between are of very rich forests of valuable trees which are also the home of variety of Wildlife.

DRAINAG.

The eastern slopes are drained by River Amaravathi which runs eastward. Westward flowing rivers are many. Thorakadavu - Aliyar Sholaiyar - Italiar - Palar - Kallar and many smaller streams. There are a number of dams constructed within and adjoining the Sanctuary for power generation and irrigation. The Parambikulam Aliyar Project is a vast net work of reservoirs and canals and power generating centres which lies within the Sanctuary. Under this Project the Amaravathi Dam, Thirumoorthy Dam, Aliyar Dam are adding to the natural beauties of the terrain.

CLIMATE AND RAIN-FALL.

Climatically the area can be ~~div~~ divided into 3 parts :-

1. Foot hills upto 2000 M.
2. Plateau regions 1000 M.
3. Higher regions 1000 m.

1) The foot hills are mostly along the East and Northern sides of the Sanctuary which are gentle to steep slopes. They are hot and dry regions. Sethumadai, Aliyar, Amaravathi are some places to halt and study these areas. The temperature is 23°C and 40°C. December, January temperatures may be 18°C to 30°C. Hot months are March to June. The rainy months of October to December may be pleasant. The largest plain tract is the Thalinjai area of Amaravathi Range.

2) The plateau regions are Topslip and Ulandy areas and Mavadappu plateau. They are about 1000 M. in elevation and have a comfortable climate in summer and rather a cold winter.

3) High elevations are Grass Hills around Valparai which are about 2500 M. in elevation and this region is rather cold as any other hill stations of South India.

RAINFALL:

The rain-fall is very widely varying say from 500 mm. to 5000 mm. The lower rain-fall being on the eastern slopes and foot hills during October-November and the plateaus enjoy both monsoons in May and June and October and November and the Western parts in Punachi Range have the heavy rain-fall during May-June.

FAUNA OF THE SANCTUARY:

With the varied geographical, climatic and vegetative characteristics that are available in the Sanctuary, it is no wonder that majority of the Indian species of Wildlife are found in this Sanctuary in different parts of the Sanctuary.

To follow the same division of the area it will be easier to describe the animals i.e. by the configuration of the ground.

THE FOOT HILLS.

As already described, the foot hills from a narrow belt on the eastern and northern boundaries of the Sanctuary. The climate is warm to hot and the rain-fall is low. The vegetation is of thorny trees and shrubs with very little grass. Also this area is subjected to heavy grazing by the numerous village cattle (as many as nearly 18,000 cow units). Also there is no buffer zone between the cultivated land and the Sanctuary. Cultivation is done right upto the boundary. So some times wild ~~and~~ animals like Elephants, Wild ~~boars~~ Boars and Deers may stray into the fields and cause some damage. Sometimes Panthers or even Tigers may kill a cattle occasionally. In the past, poaching was heavy in this area. The extent of poaching can be imagined by the fact that there is a village by name Vettaikaranpudur that is "Hunters" village" near the north-west corner of the Sanctuary.

Prior to the 1972 Indian Wildlife Protection Act, the villagers ~~are~~ were at liberty to shoot-kill or capture any wild animal that may stray into their field. Elephants were captured or killed. Deers

Usual found in the foot hills are :-

1. Elephants which may stray from the inner parts of the Sanctuary attracted by the agricultural crops like Ragi, Samai, Sugarcane, Jowar, Plantains. At a time 2 - 6 elephants may come to these areas and stray into the crop and cause some damage. Such incidents are common throughout the North and East peripheries.

2. Sambhur commonly seen in these areas around streams and water holes - especially in summer. Crop damage by them is negligible.

3. Cheetal : Only in a few places of the boundary they stray outside the forest area.

4. Mouse Deer: Nocturnal animal ~~extensively~~ occasionally seen on the boundaries.

5. Barking Deer : Occasionally seen on the boundaries.

6. The Common Langur and the Nilgiri Langur are seen along the boundaries especially around Sethumadai, Gudaravalli and on the way to Valparai.

7. Bonnet Monkeys: Seen all over the boundaries. ~~Bear~~ Bears , Hares, Jakkals, Heynas, Wild Dogs, Panthers, Black Panthers and Tigers are rarely seen.

8. Lizards and Snakes: The Monitor Lizard is commonly seen. Variety of non-poisonous snakes like the rat-snake and green snake, whip snake and occasional Pythons and Cobras and few Kraits and Vipers are seen. Chameleon and Calotis and the Jecko and ;

9. Birds - Jungle Fowl, Partridges, Ouails:

The fauna is the same except a few additions.

PLATEAU REGION:

The Topslip area has a good number of Elephants, Bisons, Sambhur, Cheetal, Barking Deer, Red Mongoose, Porcupines, King-cobras and Rat-snakes. Panther and Wild Dogs can be said fairly common. Tiger is

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Main places to visit are the Cheechali Valley, Ulandy Valley, Chinnar Valley, Varagaliar-Manamboli. Here we get the rare Lion-tailed Monkeys also. Malabar Squirrels are common in Varagaliar, Manamboli.

In the Mavadappu plateau the animals are the same. But Bisons are not as many. Nobody has reported seeing a Tiger in Mavadappu in the past 2 - 3 years. But Panthers are often seen. This plateau is the best place for ~~bird~~ Bird population. The rare giant, hornbills, Southern tree pies and the lorikeets are seen here.

The Thalinji area and the flat terrain on either side of the Munar Road from Udamalpet has a similar fauna - in addition we can see the Crocodiles in the Amaravathi Reservoir. The much-discussed Ash coloured Bison ~~xx~~ also occurs in this area.

In the rivers of these plateau areas, there are a variety of Fish-tortoises.

(3) HIGH LANDS:

The high peaks of the Sanctuary as in the Grass Hills and the Perunkundru, Pandaravarai, Navamalai etc. we have the Nilgiri Tahr or the South Indian Ibex or the Mountain-goat. It is a shy animal. The precipitous rocky hill slopes form a safe home for these nimble animals.

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The Konalar ~~in~~ Grass Hills contains some Trout-Fish.

Other animals - Slender Loris - Flying Lizard, Flying Squirrel, Four-horned antelope are of interest but not commonly seen.

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST.

For nature lovers - Grass Hills - Topslip, Varavaliar, Thalinji may be interesting to see the virgin forests and the quiet sylvan atmosphere. Sholayar, Attakatti, Aliyar and Amavarathi Dams and the gardens may be of interest to some. The Thirumurthi Temple and the bathing falls may be

interesting to some. Kodanthur Temple is another spot where villagers go for week ends.

Trekking from Upper Aliyar to Mavadappu, Kulipatti and Kurumalai and Thirumurthi forms a nice 28 mile route for those interested in trekking.

Crocodile Farm at Amaravathinagar can be visited to see the hatching and rearing of Crocodiles by this Sanctuary authorities.

ACCOMMODATION.

Forest Rest Houses are available at Topslip, Amaravathi, Varagali.Ar, Sethumadai, Manamboli, P.W.D. Rest Houses are available at Udumalpet and Amaravathi and Electricity Board Rest House at Attakatti.

Elephant rides and Van rides are available at Topslip only. Jeep ride is available from Udumalpet.

ADMINISTRATION.

The Sanctuary is under the Wildlife Warden, Mahalingapuram, Pollachi. Under the Wildlife Warden, there are the following Ranges with Range Headquarters noted against each.

Pollachi Range	- Anaimalai Farm, Anaimalai (Post).
Tunacadavu Range	- Topslip.
Punachi Range	- Waterfalls.
Udamalpet Range	- Udumalpet.
Amaravathi Range	- Udumalpet.

In addition, there are two Range Officers especially for Wildlife, one at Erode and another at Topslip.

Any further information about the Sanctuary can be obtained from the Wildlife Warden, Pollachi. Commercial trading licences for Wildlife articles trades and Hunting licences are issued from Coimbatore District by the Wildlife Warden, Pollachi.

MAMMALS OF ANIMALAIS SANCTUARY.

Shrews : Two to three species but not studies.
Bats : Two to three species not studied.

Primates:

Lorises : Slender Loris (*Loris tardigradus*)
Monkeys : Bonnet money (*Macaca radiata*)
Lion-tailed ~~monkey~~ Monkey (*Macaca silenus*)
Langurs : Nilgiri Langur (*Presbytis johni*)
Common langur (*Presbytis entellus*)

Scaly ant-eater: Pangolin - *Manis Crassicaudata*.

Rodents: Hares - Only Black naped hare (*Lepus nigricollis*)
Porcupines - Indian porcupines (*Hystrix indica*)
Squirrels - Three stripes palm squirrel (*Funambulus Palmarum*)
Flying squirrel: (*Petaurista petaurista*)
Malabar squirrel: (*Ratufa indica*)
Rats : Many species not studied.
Mice : Many species not studied.

Flesh eating animals.

Dog family : Jakkals : *Canis* species
Fix : *Vulpes* species
Wild dog : *Cuon alpinus*.
Otters : *Lutra Lutra*
Small Indian Civet : *Viverricula indica*
Common Mongoose : *Herpestes edwardsii*.
Red mongoose : *Herpestes Vitticollis*
Striped Hyena : *Hyena hyena*.

Cat Family : Tiger : (*Panthera tigris*)
Panther : (*Panthera pardus*)
Black panther : (*Panthera pardus*)
Leopard Cat : (*Felis bengalensis*)
Jungle Cat : (*Felis chaus*)

Ungulates: Elephats : (*Elephas Maximus*)
Pigs : (*Sus scrofa*)
Chevrotains : (*Tragulus meminna*)
(Mouse deer)

Deers : Sambhar : (*Cervus Unicolor*)
Cheetal : (*Axis axis*)
Barking deer : (*Muntiacus Muntjak*)
Four horned antelope : (*Tetracerus quadricornis*).

Wild Cattle: Gaur : (*Bison (Bos gaurus)*)
Goat : Nilgiri Tahr
(*Nemitragus hylocrius*)

LIST OF FAUNA:

1. Leeches (Hirudines).

2. Fishes : Trout
Tilapia
Mirror carp
Eel.

- ### 3. Reptiles : Tortoises

Crocodiles - *Crocodylus palustris*.

Lizards $\frac{3}{4}$ Geckos

Chameleons

Monitors

Skinks.

Snakes - Many including king-cobra.

- | <u>Game Birds</u> | <u>Water birds</u> | <u>Other birds</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Jungle fowl | Darter | Variety of babblers. |
| Partridge | Cormorant | Barbets |
| Sky Quail | Egrets | Bee-eaters. |
| Spur fowl | Teals | Dronger |
| Green pigeon | Ducks | Magpie |
| | | Robin |
| Emerali pigeon | Snips | Malkoha |
| Imperial Pigeon | Grouse | Minivets |
| Spotted doves | Herons | Munias |
| Blue jay | Storks | Night jars |
| Brain fever bird
(Crested hawk) | | Muthatch |
| RN Bulbuls | | Cuckoos |
| Chlonpsis | | Eagles-Created |
| Copper emiths | | Serpent eagle |
| | | Flower Peckers |
| | | Fly catchers |
| <u>-----</u> | | |
| <u>Other birds</u> | | |
| orioles | Weaver bird | Grackle-myna |
| Owls | Wood peckers | Thrushes |
| Parakeets | | Shrikes |
| Pipits | | Pale harriers |
| Pitta | | Hoopoes |
| Robin(Indian) | | Hornbill great |
| Shikra | | Hornbill |
| Sparrows | | Malabar grey |
| Sunbird | | Iora |
| Swifts | | King fishers |
| Swallows | | Lapungs |
| Treepies | | Lorikeets |
| Vultures | | |
| Wagtails | | |